

Try Ochsner's InBody Scale with Concierge Health

Doctors have long used body mass index, more commonly referred to as BMI, as a predictor of health. But new research shows that BMI has limitations as an indicator of current health status and future disease risk.

BMI is calculated based on a person's height and weight and does not take body composition into consideration. This means that a body builder, who is both fit and lean, may be considered overweight or obese based on BMI measurements.

It can also ignore serious health conditions of someone whose BMI falls within a healthy range.

As an alternative to BMI, some healthcare providers use methods like DEXA (dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry) and BIA (bioelectrical impedance analysis) to assess body composition. Recent studies have shown that the use of these measurements is a better predictor of health and future all-cause mortality risk than BMI alone.

Though some consider DEXA a more accurate method since it includes bone density, BIA is more convenient and accessible. BIA technology has also continued to improve, and Ochsner's BIA-based InBody scale is comparable to a DEXA scan in measuring body composition.

While some home scales boast BIA technology, they are not as accurate and can provide incorrect measurements. Our InBody scale sends an undetectable electrical current through the body, measuring the resistance to the current. Because muscle, fat and bones have different levels of conductivity, the scale can determine your body composition based on age, height, weight and gender.

A recent study published in Annals of Family Medicine concluded that, "body-fat percentage is stronger predictor of 15-year mortality risk in adults between the ages of 20 and 49 than BMI."

It also stated that, "when it came to deaths from heart disease, people with high body fat as measured by BIA were 262% times more likely to die than people who had a healthy percentage of body fat."

Patients with higher levels of body fat, regardless of weight, have a greater risk of developing hypertension, hyperlipidemia, diabetes, fatty liver disease, and cardiovascular disease. In addition, patients with lower levels of muscle mass have a greater risk of falls and declining health status. This is concerning to older populations who have lost muscle but are unaware due to stable weight.

BMI and waist circumference measurements cannot provide clinicians with the same data as BIA technology. As the benefits of measuring body composition become clear, Ochsner Concierge Health's fitness evaluation has the diagnostic technology and clinical application to offer patients individualized exercise recommendations and programming. Schedule your appointment today by calling 504-842-9355 and selecting option 4.

